

2002 State of the District Address

Thank you all and welcome. *Bienvenidos y gracias por su apoyo.* Just be glad that I didn't try out my piano lessons on you as well! Before we begin, let me thank everyone who made tonight possible—especially our extraordinary emcee, Brenda Richardson, the queen of East of the River, let's give her a hand? And all the students who performed tonight. Weren't they great? And I can't leave out the Dunbar Girls Basketball team, the Crimson Tide, who won the league championship Friday night. Congratulations!

You may have noticed that I've brought along a few young friends. They are from every ward in the District. They have excelled in the classroom and the community, in the arts and on the playing fields. They are counting on all of us to create the kind of city that they will want to live in tomorrow. And that's what I want to talk about tonight.

They are counting on their families. And I want to take a moment to thank my own family: first, my wife, best friend, and life partner, Diane. You just saw that famous kiss at the Wizards game, where I had the good sense to choose my wife over the hotdog. Good choice, right? And, of course, my mother Virginia, who, along with my father, adopted me as a foster child and gave me more love and support than I could have ever imagined. Thank you, Mom.

These young people up here with me are counting on our government. I want to thank all our Councilmembers, especially our Council Chair Linda Cropp, for working with me every day to address the problems facing our city, something that will be even more important as we enter budget season—our own version of March Madness.

I especially want to recognize one of Dunbar's most distinguished graduates, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, who is our collective voice on Capitol Hill. It is time that she becomes our vote as well! Let me also thank Senator Landrieu, one of the greatest advocates we've had in Congress. And to School Board President Peggy Cooper Cafritz, and the entire School Board—thank you for fighting the good fight to create a public school system worthy of our Nation's Capital and our children.

Our young people are counting on my Administration and I promise we will not let them down. And I say "we" purposely. There are people in my Cabinet and on my staff who work day in and day out for this city. I'd like my Cabinet to stand.

These students are counting on all our citizens—especially our faith leaders. Let me thank the ministers who lifted our hearts tonight, as they always do. And to the new members of my Faith Advisory Council, could you please stand? Thank you for guiding me, for telling me all about those rusty bolts, and for leading us all as we rise to meet our toughest challenges—from youth violence to AIDS to welcoming our ex-offenders home with new opportunities.

Now, I've already mentioned the girls' basketball team, but there is another group of DC athletes here. They just brought home medals from the Olympics—the Senior Olympics.

I gotta tell you: I saw a lot of amazing athletes in Utah, but none of them inspired me more than Lawrence Wooten, who just won the Silver medal in swimming at age 90. Could he and our other six Olympians please stand?

It's only fitting to have a conversation about the past and the future here—at a place that embodies both. When people want to learn about our rich African American history and heritage, they come to DC—they come to Howard University, to the homes of Frederick Douglass and Duke Ellington, and to Dunbar, where African Americans flocked to get a first rate education during the darkest days of segregation. I want to thank Principal Judith Richardson, and the entire Dunbar community for making sure, as you say here, that the "tradition of excellence continues."

Over there on the wall, is a great Paul Dunbar line that gives us some good advice about coping with life's inevitable ups and downs. "Keep a-pluggin' away," it says. And that's what we've done together these past few years. It wasn't long ago when headlines read: "A city that doesn't work," and longtime residents gave up waiting for the trash trucks and called the moving vans instead. Now, there were those who told us it would always be this way. That nothing would change. But we knew that if we kept a-pluggin' away, we could begin to restore trust in our government and in our city.

And we have. You may have noticed that I left a few people out of my acknowledgments tonight. This is the first State of the District Address where I don't have to welcome the Control Board. And it's not because they had dinner plans. It's because they are history. Because we went from economic disaster to economic boom. From a \$500 million deficit to balanced budgets—five years in a row. From junk bond status on Wall Street to \$10 billion in private investment across our entire city. And it's because we went from a city governed by courts and control boards to one government, led by officials who are accountable to the voters they represent. That was the goal I set on the day of my inaugural. Today we have met it. And I welcome Alice Rivlin tonight, as a *private* citizen. Let's thank her, and the other members of the Board for volunteering their time and effort to help us get back on our feet.

There is a renewed sense of pride in the District these days. I hear it everywhere I go: from people who are driving down our streets—and instead of finding potholes the size of the Potomac—they are seeing more than 1500 blocks of streets and alleys resurfaced. From children, who instead of being turned away at locked swimming pools, are not only going to pools, but playing in six new or renovated recreation centers.

I hear this optimism from people, once out of work, who have one of 5,000 new jobs created last year. Or those who hope to move into the 17,000 new homes and apartments planned or under construction around the city. I hear it from people who used to be surprised to reach a human voice at the DC government, and now they find a helpful one. Or from those who feel safer, because the homicide rate is now the lowest it's been in 15 years. And, I hear this optimism from people who are hiring moving vans again—but this time to move back into our city.

Now, there's a reason for that. It's the same reason the Olympic games and Major League Baseball are setting their sights on us. And that's because, ladies and gentleman, the State of the District is strong—and the best is yet to come.

At no time was that clearer than after September 11, when our city—which was targeted because it is a symbol of America—fought back with what is best about America. I think of the postal workers I met from Brentwood, who refused to let fear stand in the way of duty, a value I saw in my parents, who worked most of their lives for the US Postal Service. Or all the dedicated health care professionals, HAZMAT response teams, police officers, EMS technicians, and firefighters who worked around the clock to protect us all.

Minutes after the Pentagon was hit, we had 80 firefighters on the 14th Street Bridge, ready to roll. Truck Company 4 was one of the first to arrive, working hours, through intense heat and smoke, to find survivors. Not once, not twice, but three times they were told to evacuate the building, for fear there would be another attack. But, Lieutenant Craig Duck, who was with Truck 4 that day, said they refused to stop. "The sentiment," he explained, echoing the attitude of thousands of firefighters, dispatchers and emergency workers that day, "was 'we have a job to do, let God decide our fate.'"

It's the same attitude we've seen ever since. It was a tough fight—but National Airport is back open again. People are getting back to work. Children are back visiting the White House. When I'm traveling these days, people often say to me: "Isn't it amazing, how DC citizens stepped forward in the wake of tragedy?" Well, yes, it's amazing, but what's even more amazing is that, when no one else is watching, our residents come forward every day.

I'm talking about the people I've met in every section of the city who are coming forward to rid their streets of crime, to clean up parks and schools, to improve our children's lives. I'm talking about the people who are squeezing time out of their busy schedules to come forward at town halls and Citizen Summits with new ideas, and, yes, with tough criticism. And that's exactly as it should be. There are plenty of folks, like ANC Commissioner Mary Jackson in Ward 7, who have made a big time commitment to their communities, and have a whole lot to say about what I'm *not* doing. And that's democracy. That's what built this city, and that's what will keep it going.

So I say to every single person in the District: bring it on. Because, while we are no longer the city we once were, we are not yet the city we can become. You've heard me talk a lot about better government, but it's not the end game. It's the means—the means to justice, the means to opportunities for all.

It's no secret to any of us that Washington, DC still isn't there yet—that our story is still in many ways a tale of two cities. We have been named the "Top Wired City" and shamed by having the highest child poverty rate in America. We have been named the second best city for African Americans, and shamed by having the lowest average life span—57 years—for African American men.

Let's face it. We are still a city too often divided by skin color, income, and geography. And it's not our differences that are the problem—they are what make us strong and great. We are strong and great because we are black and white, rich and poor, Asian and Latino, gay and straight, business leaders and faith leaders, veterans and students. The bible teaches us that we have "diversities of gifts, but the same spirit."

So let's celebrate our differences, but never—ever—tolerate disparities in jobs and education, health care, and housing. Etched into the ground at Freedom Plaza, there is a Charles Dickens quote that calls DC a "City of Magnificent Intentions." Well, it falls to us now to go beyond intentions and become one magnificent city. And I want us to start a conversation tonight about the road we must travel to get there.

Because before I finish this speech, a child will be born somewhere in the District of Columbia. What will her life be like? What will she become? My friends: that will depend on us. If we are going to create one city, then all children must have the education to go as far as their dreams and determination will take them.

You know, in some African cultures, people greet each other with the question: "How are the children?" Because the answer really tells us everything we need to know about how we're doing as a people. So, "How are the children in DC?" Well, certainly better off than a few years ago. The number of young people being killed has decreased by almost 70 percent. The number of infants dying dropped by 20 percent in one year alone. And, since 1998, there are 25,000 more children and teens who, instead of hanging out on the streets when they are out of school, now have safe places to play and to learn.

But, when we ask ourselves how the children are, unfortunately the answer is still: Which ones? The ones whose parents shower them with love, or the 3,000 still languishing in foster care that deserve loving adoptive homes? The ones bringing home A's or the ones bringing home guns? I spend a lot of time listening to young people all over our city, including at my Youth Summit, "The City is Mine" and they say there is nothing more important we can do for them than fix our schools.

I heard that at my annual school budget hearing a few weeks ago, where 60 witnesses testified until after midnight. One 6th grade girl, Alicia Musafiri, told me she likes her teachers at Randle Highlands Elementary, and that the food is "*sometimes ok.*" But she explained how the playground has a yellow ribbon around it, because it's too dangerous. Yellow ribbons, as we know, are for crimes. And this is a crime.

Now, I may not have direct responsibility for our schools, but, like the rest of our city's leaders, I have a responsibility to these children. At the same time that I've decreased other spending, I've fought to increase the public school budget by more than 40 percent. But that means increasing our expectations as well.

When I visited classrooms this school year, I saw some welcome improvements—walls freshly painted, floors and windows clean. Last year, I challenged us to take on our lowest performing schools, and this year the School Board is starting to transform nine of

them. And I thank them for that. Our charter schools are giving more than 10,000 young people new choices—and we need to make sure that they are learning in real classrooms, not cramped basements.

But, quite frankly, despite the good efforts of our new School Board, change is still not coming fast enough. And much of that is because of skyrocketing Special Education costs. Special Ed students are roughly 16 percent of the school population, but serving them eats up more than 30 percent of the school budget—\$200 million. If we do nothing, these costs will only get steeper, and our chances of addressing other critical problems in our schools will get even slimmer.

In 2000, we had nearly 1,500 Special Ed hearings, compared to 24 in Chicago, a city four times our size. There is something seriously wrong when there is more focus on Special Ed in DC courtrooms than DC classrooms. Two of the biggest Special Ed costs—out of state tuition and transportation—are state responsibilities, and I hope Congress will work with us to address them.

But, we also have to get real about fixing Special Education ourselves—so that all children can attend schools in their own communities. The School Board has shown me a plan for doing just that. It starts with eight new programs within our public schools, three new charter schools, and at least two private schools—all of which would serve Special Ed students who now have to travel long distances every day, at great emotional cost to their families and great financial cost to the District.

This plan is a good start. But, make no mistake: now is the time for the Mayor, the City Council, the School Board and the CFO to take this plan and form one task force—each of us with defined roles, but all of us in agreement on what needs to be done. Over the next two years, we must see deadlines met and savings realized. We must see improvements for children and real consequences for failure. I am willing to give the school system extraordinary power and flexibility to fix Special Ed. I am willing to give them whatever it takes. I only ask one thing: get the job done.

Next year, I don't want to hear about what we're *going* to do to improve education. I want to hear about what we've *done* to give all children what they deserve—from well-kept schools to good teachers. I worked to bring in 102 new teaching fellows who have given up careers in other fields to help our children. I met one fellow, Mayank Keshaviah, who went from working at an Internet start-up to teaching at HD Cooke Elementary School. He says that because of the positive changes taking place there, children who were once scared of coming to school, now look forward to it.

These fellows are joining 5,000 other dedicated teachers in DC. Our teachers work tirelessly every day—and they deserve to be better paid. I will put enough money in the budget to increase teacher salaries by up to 20 percent over the next three years. If we want to attract and keep the best teachers in DC classrooms, we must finally make our salaries competitive with Montgomery and Fairfax counties.

Our public schools will only succeed if they meet the needs of all children, whether they are preparing for college, the building trades, or the high-tech world. The opening of McKinley Technology High School in 2003 is a key step in that direction. And so is the work we've done to almost double the number of DC young people going to college. Think about it. This increase is a testament to the federally funded tuition assistance program, which has already helped 1,900 young people afford college. And it's a testament to the DC College Access Program, the amazing partnership between the business community and the city to help our children prepare for—and pay for a college education.

But, when it comes to access to higher education, the District still falls short. That's why I'm dedicating an additional \$3 million to UDC so it can raise salaries for staff and improve key academic programs. I am putting aside these precious dollars because I believe this city needs a great public university. It needs UDC. And UDC needs to serve our young people. I'm calling on everyone—the City Council, the business community, and myself—to make a promise: within five years, every young person who wants to go to college, will be able to go. And this year, I am going to put a down payment on that goal by tripling local funding for college financial aid—an additional \$1.5 million.

Second, if we are going to be one magnificent city, then every neighborhood must be a place people want to call home. This is especially important now. We know that people flocked to our cities during the Industrial Revolution, and fled from them after World War II. But, today, cities like ours are attracting people back—to listen to jazz on U Street, to spend more time reading to their kids than sitting in rush hour on the Beltway, and, most important, to seek economic opportunity in a new information age. It wasn't that long ago, that most saw this kind of economic potential only in certain parts of our city, while other parts were completely written off. Well, I had a different view. And so when I became your mayor, I knew we could create a vibrant downtown, healthy commercial corridors, thriving neighborhoods, and an Anacostia waterfront that becomes one of the nation's greatest.

And we are. Today, no one disputes the incredible progress that has been made downtown, where vacant storefronts have turned into restaurants, offices, art galleries, and, now, homes. Some have criticized my focus on downtown, but I'm not going to apologize for bringing prosperity to a city that struggled for so long. Let me be clear: what we're doing downtown matters across town—whether we're talking about creating jobs for people who have been out of work or taking \$25 million from one sale on Pennsylvania Avenue, and using it to develop affordable housing in neighborhoods where rising property values are threatening our hardworking families.

I'm proud of that. Just as I'm proud of what we're doing to bring this kind of prosperity to every corner of the city and the boulevards that connect them. Our commercial corridors—H Street, Georgia Avenue, MLK Avenue, New York Avenue, and all of Pennsylvania Avenue—must be the arteries of this city, carrying us from one neighborhood to another, and pumping new life into communities too long ignored.

From day one, I have said that we need to build this city, neighborhood by neighborhood. That means turning the empty parking lot near Rhode Island Avenue into a \$60 million shopping center, the first in Northeast in decades. That means helping to create almost 5,000 homes for low-and-moderate-income families in Ward 8 alone, the result of almost half a billion dollars in public and private investment.

And that means continuing to consult the real experts, our citizens. You know, over the past year, more than 1,500 people working in community clusters, core teams, and PSAs put aside nights and weekends to tell me what they need most in their neighborhoods. And, when you look at my budget this year, you will see how we are responding to every community: More beat cops along MLK Avenue. Upgrade Benning Road Bridge. Slow down traffic in Friendship Heights. Shut down open-air drug markets in Ivy City. Repave sidewalks and install bike racks on Capitol Hill. Attract a sit-down restaurant on Georgia Avenue, and open up more neighborhood stores across the city.

I met an owner of one such business about a month ago. Jorge Zamarano told me how he had wanted to expand his restaurant, the Banana Café in Southeast, because it was so popular that lines were forming out the door. But, instead of moving out of the neighborhood, the Barracks Row Main Street program helped him find a good lease on the exact same street. This is what we can do with ReStore DC, a new \$7.5 million initiative to support business districts in our neighborhoods.

Because yes, this is about expanding our middle class and attracting people back into DC, but not at the expense of the residents who already live here. I believe that the men and women who built this city and stayed during the tough times, should live in neighborhoods with less crime and more jobs, with good housing and affordable transportation, with clean air and water, and with local stores and theaters so they don't have to travel out of state for a family outing.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. understood why this was so important. He said the next phase of the civil rights struggle would be about economic power. And that's more than economic development—it's economic justice. Because despite all the dramatic improvements, we cannot close our eyes to the divides that still exist.

Yes, we are bringing health insurance to almost 20,000 more people and giving them access to their own doctor and the regular care they deserve—from check-ups to immunizations. Instead of just treating people once they're already sick, we are creating a health care system that focuses on preventing diseases in the first place. But we will not bridge the health care divide until we follow the example we've set with infant mortality—and, within the next five years, lower the rates of AIDS, diabetes, heart disease, and other deadly diseases that disproportionately afflict our poorest citizens.

Yes, we are working to keep our young people from falling victim to crime, but we will only bridge the safety divide when police officers are visible in all parts of town, and when we get rid of all blight, from abandoned cars to 4,000 abandoned buildings.

Yes, we are helping to build more than 11,000 homes and apartments for low-and moderate-income families. And yes, we passed landmark housing legislation to help develop new homes, preserve affordable housing, and convert dilapidated buildings. But, ladies and gentlemen: we will not bridge the housing divide until we make the District a national leader in home ownership. And I want to be clear: this is not just about helping people buy their first homes. It's also about limiting property tax increases for our longtime residents with low incomes, so they can stay in the homes where they've raised their families. It's about cracking down on slumlords and helping renters exercise their rights. And it's about making sure that, in the capital of the richest country in the world, no one ever has to sleep on the streets, just because they can't find shelter.

Yes, over the last three years, we awarded \$1.2 billion in contracts to small, local, and disadvantaged businesses—but I will direct all of my agencies to double their efforts. Because, if we want to bridge the opportunity divide, more African Americans, Latinos, and others too often pushed to the margins must have the chance to start and expand their small businesses.

Nothing would better symbolize our success in bridging these divides than finally restoring the Anacostia waterfront. I always take visitors up to St. Elizabeth's to see the breathtaking view of the District, and the Anacostia River that runs through it. It was on the river's banks that I made my first campaign promises. I took a canoe to Kingman Island, and I think the press only came to see me capsize—literally. Some are still waiting. That day, I said that the Anacostia must become one of our most valued natural resources.

And we're on our way. We've joined 18 federal agencies to commit more than \$600 million for the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative. To clean up its islands and Poplar Point. To restore over 40 acres of wetlands. To build a "River Walk" along the water.

When I go there now, I imagine how all it will look when we are done. I see a haven for swimming and hiking, a habitat for bald eagles and catfish alike. I hear the echoes of children laughing as they bike across new bridges and couples relaxing on blankets at Haines Point. I see people living in waterfront neighborhoods, such as Near Southeast, where \$400 million is being invested in homes for very low-income families. I see people coming from all over the city to dine, shop, and work. I see a revitalized Pennsylvania Avenue, boat docks, museums, and public transportation to bring people there. I see a river that was once a national embarrassment, become a national treasure.

Of course, the legacy of the Anacostia, just like the legacy we leave for our children's education and the neighborhoods they will grow up in, won't happen overnight. And it won't happen unless our citizens and our elected officials have the power to determine our future. And that is the final point I want to make tonight.

Every time I walk across Freedom Plaza, I think about what it meant for our government to be back in the John A. Wilson Building, back in the seat of power, back to where home

rule began in DC. But I also think about the many freedoms that still elude us.

Some may characterize our unique status as a mere bureaucratic oddity. But it's much more than that. It is a civil rights violation. African Americans and women have fought for and died for the right to vote. Yet here, in the capital of democracy, live one of the largest blocs of disenfranchised voters in the world. District residents fight for freedom abroad and pay more than \$2 billion a year in federal taxes at home. It is time to give us a vote in both the House and the Senate.

This is also an issue of self-government. It took ten years for the District to be able to honor the will of the voters and provide domestic partnership benefits to gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender couples. But now we have. Thanks to our Committee Chairs, Senator Landrieu and Congressman Knollenberg, we've seen a welcome reduction in the number of federal restrictions on our budget.

But there is no guarantee that we won't see more Congressional meddling, if they leave. No other jurisdiction must submit its budget to an outside authority nine months in advance. No other jurisdiction must wait to invest funds in new programs while members of Congress from other states play politics with its budget. It is time for the District of Columbia to have self-government—not student government.

This is also an economic issue. The residents of the District are forced to shoulder about \$450 million in state costs, including spiraling Special Ed and Medicaid burdens, without a state tax base to support them. Unlike other states, Congress prohibits the District from taxing the more than one million non-residents who use our services every day without paying a dime in income taxes. Unlike other cities and states, fully 53 percent of property in DC cannot be taxed.

And unlike other states, we provide services—\$225 million this year alone—that allow the federal government to perform its duties, and even more when disaster strikes. There is no federal fire truck for the White House, no federal hazardous materials team to be first on the scene when anthrax is reported. District taxpayers foot the bill.

Right now, we are operating one emergency away from financial crisis. And, if we are not vigilant, we could find ourselves right back where we were just six short years ago. You know, when I started as CFO, our problems were mostly a blend of management (lack of it), revenue collection (lack of it), and the unbalanced federal relationship. But we changed much of that. There is still room for improvement, believe me, I know. But our biggest challenge now is a structural one.

It's simple. No other jurisdiction has to perform city, state, and county functions—and we have to do it with the smallest tax base of any city our size. This is not about dealing with 9/11 or national economic trends. This is about a problem that is unique to the District, and one that experts have been warning us about for a decade. Unless we address it, the government services that you and I count on today cannot be sustained—let alone expanded—next year.

Because of our unique status, there is a \$400 million annual gap between the revenue we can expect and the levels of services that we all want for our Nation's Capital. And so everyone in the District who worked so hard to turn our city around now needs to ask Congress to fix this problem. I know Congress wants to help. So contact your Senators and educate them about—oh wait, you don't have a Senator!

And, if we are going to ask the federal government to step up, we need to do the same. I've already talked about Special Ed, but we also must do a much better job with Medicaid—a much better job. We don't even bill correctly for the money we're owed. I will appoint a Director of Medicaid Reform to get those costs under control once and for all. I'm also telling agencies to tighten their belts, and live within their means. This we must do, but understand: this won't solve all our problems.

So, I say to the Council: let's put everything on the table, and that includes holding off on tax cuts until we can afford them. Look, I'm a politician in an election year. I'd love to tell you that we can cut your taxes. But, you didn't elect me because I'm a good politician. You elected me to make the right choices—not to go back to the days of fiscal recklessness. Not to slash our services and reverse the progress we've made. The Control Board is not coming back on my watch.

No doubt, there have been some tough moments over the past three years—but never a moment when I didn't love this job with all my heart. It is the privilege of a lifetime to wake up every day and work for you.

I love meeting young people like 11-year old Darya Bulluck, an honor roll student at Amidon Elementary School, who could easily be standing in my shoes one day. I love hearing about residents like ANC Commissioner Christopher Lively, who patrols his neighborhood almost every day to report illegal activity. I love talking to people like Wilhelmina Lawson, who is making her Trinidad neighborhood more beautiful.

And I am humbled beyond belief by the courage of parents like Michelle and Clifton Cottom who lost their daughter Asia on September 11. Instead of lashing out, they asked for us all to honor their daughter's spirit—and now we are. Working with environmental organizations, we are creating a nature discovery program at Kingman Island for all 5th and 6th graders in DC. It will be a living memorial to Asia, her classmates, teachers, and the National Geographic staff member who died en route to the same kind of program in California.

And we will remember the spirit of all the people who died on September 11 by working to plant thousands of trees in the District, each one a tribute to a life lost. I'll always remember what Joyce Johnson, who lost her husband, Dennis, said: "It's [because of] the spirit I see in people like you who care enough to give, that I can go on, and I know I will survive. And I know that America will survive."

Well, in many ways, planting a tree is the ultimate act of faith that we, as a people, will survive. When you plant a seed, you must water its roots. You must nurture its soil. But

you do so knowing that, while you may never sit under its shade, others will. It's the same way with our city. Tonight, we are planting seeds that will grow into children who have good schools and the other opportunities they need to achieve their greatest dreams. We are planting seeds that will grow into a true center of democracy where the voices of all residents are heard in town meetings, in city hall, and yes, the in halls of Congress. And we are planting seeds that will grow into thriving neighborhoods in every corner of our city.

And how will we know when these seeds have grown into the one magnificent city that we are destined to be? We will know when we stand on the hill at St. Elizabeth's and look out at the Anacostia, and see people shopping, working, eating, swimming, boating, and bringing their out-of-town guests to see the jewel of our city.

So tonight, my friends, let that river that once divided us as two cities, unite us as one city. Let it bridge the gap between the haves and have-nots. Let its flow remind each of us to pour out rivers of compassion and justice to all our citizens. Let its currents carry us forward to a new day.

Back in 1959, Dr. King said, "As I stand here and look out upon the thousands of negro faces, and the thousands of white faces, intermingled like the waters of a river, I see only one face—the face of the future." So, too, must we. Because even though we may not be here to see all the fruits of our labor, we plant these seeds for that child being born in DC tonight. We plant them for the young people in this room. We plant them for our future.

God bless the District of Columbia and all of us proud to call this city home.